

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
/093 W

-----121712 051102Z /11

O R 051010Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5913

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN

USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0422

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, SO, ET

SUBJ: SOMALI FORCES THROWN BACK ON JIGJIGA

REF: DJIBOUTI 0275

1. SOMALI POLICE COLONEL OSMAN AHMED HUSSEIN TOLD THE AMBASSADOR
LAST NIGHT, MARCH 4, THAT CUBAN PARATROOPERS HAD LANDED
IN THE VICINITY OF JIGJIGA AND THAT THE SITUATION THERE WAS
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INCREASINGLY SERIOUS FROM THE SOMALI POINT OF VIEW. COL.
OSMAN ADDED THAT PRESIDENT SIAD FLEW TO HARGEISA ON THE 4TH
FOR A FIRST HAND REVIEW OF THE FIGHTING FROM COMMAND HEAD-
QUARTERS. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION VIA AIRPORT OFFICIALS OF
SIAD'S DEPARTURE YESTERDAY. ONE SOMALI REPORTS HEARING THE
PARATROOP LANDINGS REPORTED ON RADIO MOGADISCIO. ANOTHER
CONTENDS THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION

AROUND JIGJIGA UNTIL MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT, AND EVEN THEN NO REFERENCES TO PARATROOP DROPS, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE REPORTS OF AIR-LIFTED TANKS IN SUPPORT OF ETHIOPIAN FORCES.

2. THIS MORNING'S LIBERATION FRONT BULLETIN,, DANAB, AND THE SOMALI DAILY OCTOBER STAR, BOTH OF MARCH 5, REPORT THAT RUSSIAN AND CUBAN MERCENARIES IN TANKS TRANSPORTED BY MT-6 HELICOPTERS DIRECTLY ATTACKED JIGJIGA. DANAB CONTENDS THERE WERE MORE THAN SEVENTY TANKS INVOLVED, BUT NO ETHIOPIAN INFANTRY. DANAB ALSO REPORTS MORE THAN 62 AIR SORTIES CARRIED OUT AGAINST LIBERATION FRONT DEFENSE LINES. THE AGENCY CONTENDS SOMALI TROOPS ARE CONCENTRATING ABOUT JIGJIGA IN ORDER TO UNDERTAKE AN OFFENSIVE.

3. TWO PROFESSIONAL MILITARY OBSERVERS WITH WHOM THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN IN PERIODIC CONTACT HAVE SAID INDEPENDENTLY IN THE PAST THREE DAYS THAT THEY BELIEVE SOME SOMALI REGULAR UNITS ARE SHIFTING TO UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE TACTICS.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE DETAIL IS CONFLICTING, THE ABOVE FRAGMENTS CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF OTHER INDICATORS, INCLUDING REFTTEL, AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY UNDERSCORE THE SEVERITY OF THE MILITARY SITUATION. WITH ETHIOPIAN AND ALLIED FORCES REPORTEDLY WITHIN TWENTY-FIVE MILES OF JIGJIGA, AND POSSIBLY AS CLOSE AS 40 MILES FROM THE

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PRE-HOSTILITIES BORDER, IT MAY WELL BE THAT SIAD'S OPPORTUNITY WITHDRAW HIS REGULAR FORCES, EVEN IF HE CHOSE TO DO SO, IS SLIPPING FROM HIS CONTROL.
LOUGHRAN

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